

COMMUNICATIONS.

DRUGGIST AND PHYSICIAN.

To the Editor of the STATE JOURNAL:—In a recent issue of your valued publication a correspondent endeavored to make it appear that the activities of the National Association of Retail Druggists were inimical to the interests of the medical profession. He says of our Association:

It is trying to help the retail druggist. In doing so it has promulgated the doctrine that no wholesale druggist shall sell medicines to physicians, and that physicians shall not put up their own prescriptions if they want to. Is it not time for the medical profession to organize and have drug stores established where nothing is sold but medicines and remedies actually prescribed by physicians?

This statement by your correspondent gives a false view of the work undertaken by the N. A. R. D. as it relates to physicians, and I am sure you will grant me enough space to correctly state our position. It is the policy of our great organization to promote the closest possible co-operation between pharmacists and physicians. We believe that the pharmacist should be protected in his legitimate sphere of activity, and that the physician is entitled to equal protection in his; and to that end we feel that no physician who desires the co-operation and support of the pharmacist can consistently dispense his own medicines; neither will a pharmacist who courts the friendly interest of his physician neighbors be foolish enough to engage in the practice of counter-prescribing.

It may be of interest to your readers to know that our organization department is making converts daily among physicians and druggists to the association's "give and take" plan that is so effectually uniting the two professions in bonds of personal and professional unity and good-will. Local associations of pharmacists and local medical societies, under the inspiration of the N. A. R. D. teaching, have been induced to confer with each other and to meet and banquet together, and the physicians are in every instance as well pleased with the result of this liberal and just policy as the pharmacists. Let me quote one of our correspondents, who in the November 26th number of our official publication, *N. A. R. D. Notes*, says:

Stand by the doctors through thick and thin. Show the doctor that you are his friend. Inquire after his patients; always have a pleasant word for him. Discuss with him his side of the fence a little. I assure you that this taking him by the hand (figuratively) and saying: "Doctor, let us be sworn friends; we are dependent on each other, and as long as we have to play in the same yard, let us make our mud pies without throwing mud on each others cloths", is a success. That's the way we play down here.

This correspondent reflects the N. A. R. D. sentiment perfectly. I could quote *ad finem* from the printed files of *Notes* and from the correspondence files at national headquarters; all these expressions breathing the same spirit of co-operation and good-will toward their brethren in the medical profession. In conclusion, let me quote from Dr. L. Park Drayer, a practicing physician at Fort Wayne, Ind., who is not identified in any way with pharmacy, and opposes the practice of dispensing by physicians for the following reasons:

First. He is a physician and not a pharmacist.

Second. His time with a patient must, if it results in the greatest good to the patient, be devoted to the diagnosis and treatment of his case.

Third. He is not a merchant or a vender of material things.

Fourth. He cannot devote a proper amount of time to the preparation of active and reliable drugs and do a general practice successfully.

Fifth. His drugs of necessity must deteriorate.

Sixth. He falls into routine ways prescribing pills, the formula of which was studied out with some one else's brains, and many times too often does not fill the bill.

Seventh. He is apt to employ cheap remedies in preference to the better quality of pharmaceutical preparations.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES M. CARR.

Director Dept. of Publicity,

N. A. R. D.

Chicago, November 28, 1904.

WOOD-ALCOHOL POISONING.

To the Editor of the STATE JOURNAL:—A few days since, by presenting to the San Francisco County Medical Society a case of wood-alcohol poisoning, I have tried to draw local attention to a matter of public moment, as evinced by the attitude of the A. M. A. regarding the same, and the publicity it has received more recently still in the daily press on the occasion of the deaths of several persons in New York from the same poison. Its acute effects, however, in all probability do not by any means exhaust the possible dangers from methyl alcohol. As yet, nothing definite has been reported regarding consequences from its habitual use. A priori it would seem but natural to presume that, when taken that way, it might eventually attack the optic nerve, e. g., analogously to ethyl alcohol. Whilst the anatomically and clinically well-defined, axial retrobulbar neuritis, due to the latter, gives a fair prognosis, however, it is greatly to be feared that from methylated preparations such a process might not alone result much more readily, but judging by their acute effects, that it would also prove much graver prognostically. Evidently, so far, in the cases of chronic alcoholists the attention has not been directed to the practical value of finding out whether methyl or ethyl alcohol are consumed; in fact, I believe, from what I have heard since my own attention has been drawn to the point, that both agents may often be partaken of promiscuously. However, collectively, no doubt, the more specific role of methyl alcohol could be ascertained readily; in this connection also the habitual users of stomachica, such as methylated essence of ginger and other deodorized methyl alcohol preparations, need watching.

It is to be hoped that, now the attention of the profession has been called to the matter in its acute features so forcibly by Drs. Buller and Wood (*Journal of A. M. A.*, 1904, Nos. 14 to 18) data will soon be gathered regarding this additional aspect of it.

C. S. G. NAGEL.

SAN FRANCISCO AND THE QUACKS.

Very energetic work against the peace and quiet of the illegal practitioners in San Francisco is reported by the Executive Committee of that County's Medical Society. The methods pursued are worth the careful study of other county societies. The work is placed in the hands of the Executive Committee, who have power to retain the services of an attorney. The subject was laid before the Mayor, who decidedly approved of enforcing the law, and he wrote the following letter to the chief of police:

SAN FRANCISCO, November 18, 1904.

HON. CHIEF WITTMAN,—DEAR SIR: The San Francisco County Medical Society and the State Board of Examiners are making a determined effort to prosecute illegal practitioners of medicine. The object is a worthy one and commends itself to every citizen. I, therefore, send this letter to you, recommending that you detail a detective to take special charge of this work, and to work in conjunction with the officers of the San Francisco County Medical Society having this matter in charge. I am personally interested in this, and hope that you will give it your immediate attention, with a view to protecting the public against the scourge of charlatanism.

Yours very truly,

E. E. SCHMITZ, Mayor.

At the request of the Committee, the chief of police appointed one of the detectives, Mr. Matheson, to act under instructions of the Committee and to be at their disposal in getting evidence. The result of this simple and direct course is that complaints and warrants have been secured against every illegal practitioner in the city (about twenty-five) of whom the Committee has any knowledge. The complaints are signed either by Mr. Matheson or by some member of the Committee, and invariably are signed for the Executive Committee of the County Medical Society.